

*With the Author's Emphs*

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THE  
**United Empire Loyalists of Canada**

A SERMON

BY THE

REVEREND R. S. FORNERI, B.D.

RECTOR OF ADOLPHUSTOWN

PREACHED IN

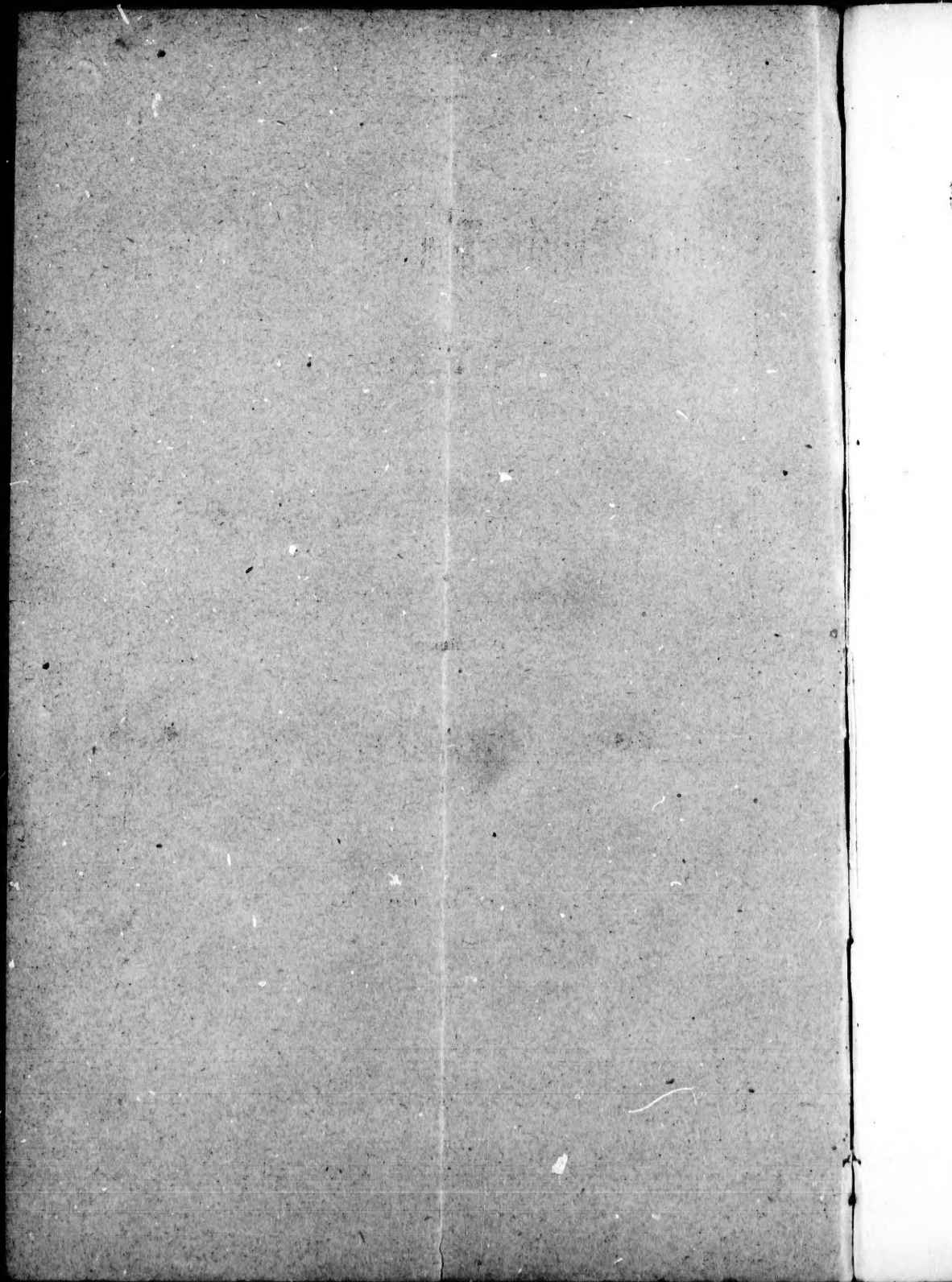
**St. George's Cathedral, Kingston, Ont.**

ON

**SUNDAY, MAY 18th, 1884**

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KINGSTON  
PRINTED AT THE DAILY NEWS OFFICE  
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## SERMON.

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1 Peter II. 17. Honour all men: Love the brotherhood: Fear God: Honour the king.

I am permitted to address you this morning upon a subject which to the patriotic Canadian is full of pride and interest, viz.: concerning those American Colonists of the last century whose loyalty to the unity of the British Empire amid extreme sufferings and losses earned for them the title of the United Empire Loyalists, *par excellence*; and also to appeal to you in behalf of an object which I have at heart, the erection of a Memorial Church in that historic locality\* in which my lot is cast, to those faithful and heroic lovers of their sovereign and country.

And in connection with such a subject, no text, it seems to me, could be more appropriate than that which I have just read, for the duties of which it speaks are those virtues which were regnant in the character of the old Loyalists, and which made them fit men, under God, to lay the foundation of a young nation—its political, educational and religious institutions, and to graft in the hearts of their children and children's children those lofty principles of loyalty and morality which to this day distinguish the Canadian character—principles which are indispensable to the true progress and prosperity of a people.

In this first part of my discourse I shall proceed to shew that the conduct of the U. E. Loyalists, as it appears upon the page of history, exemplified in an eminent manner the obligations enforced by the Apostle in the text, and that thus, though dead, they yet speak to us and say "Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King."

Reversing the order of these precepts for the convenience of consideration, let us see, first, how these fathers of our country *Honored the King*.

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\*Adolphustown—than which "no Township is more rich in historic matters pertaining to the U. E. Loyalists. Here settled a worthy band of refugees whose lineage can be traced back to noble names in France, Germany and Holland; here was the birthplace of many of Canada's more prominent and worthy sons, and here repose the ashes of a large number of the devoted pioneers." Dr. Caniff's History p. 245.

It was not because they were the blind and fanatical advocates of the doctrine of the "Divine right of Kings," as it is called, that they were the opponents of the rebellion which arose in their midst. It was not, as has been asserted, that they were office-holders under the British Government, which let them to assume the role of Loyalists, for the vast number of them were not servants of the crown at all. It was not that their illiteracy rendered them incapable of taking an intelligent view of the controversy between the mother country and their own, and that on this account they were ready servilely to acquiesce in any act of British tyranny or injustice against the colonies, for it is well known that the great bulk of the educated and refined, and the professional classes; the leading lawyers, the prominent medical men, the greater number of the Clergy were all Loyalists; and so far from upholding the course of England, they deprecated her infatuated policy which had brought about so cruel a conflict; much less was it, as has been maliciously alleged by their spoilers, that they were cowards and would not stand up with them for their colonial rights. Was it the part of cowards to take sides with the minority? to expose themselves and families by their profession of attachment to the throne of England, to mob violence, to confiscations, imprisonment, banishment and even death on the scaffold? Was it like cowards to buckle on their swords, as thousands of them did, and stand up nobly in defence of their King and Fatherland? No, the Loyalists did not "Honour the King," because they were without understanding or feeling, religion or courage; but rather because they possessed these qualities in a high degree, and from their exalted standpoint of duty and intelligent conviction, believed that under the circumstances to rebel was wrong, immoral, that it was wicked unnecessarily to plunge the colonies into the horrors of a fratricidal war, wrong to sever themselves from the British Empire, unnatural and wrong, for temporary grievances, to foreswear King and Country and the old flag under which they had been born and lived, and which had thrown its protection over them in the land of their adoption.

Such were some of the considerations which animated the Loyalists with unflinching patriotism, and nerved them in the midst of raging enemies, and in the face of untold losses and persecutions to "honor the king," and so to leave us an example that should arm us with the same mind.



And this leads me to observe in the second place that these Loyalists were in the main men who "feared God." From the nature of the case it must have been so, for such fidelity to principle as they exhibited could have had its root in nothing but in true religion—and history supports this conclusion. Dr. Canniff remarks\* "their feelings of loyalty were strengthened by their spiritual instructors." And again he says; "The fires of patriotism were kept aglow in many a heart by the minister's earnest prayer." And no wonder if the clergy in general were such men of God as the Rev. Charles Inglis, first Bishop of Nova Scotia and the Rev. John Stuart first Rector of Kingston, both refugee clergymen. Of the former, it is related that at the beginning of the Revolution, with the courage of a confessor, he persisted in praying for the King and Parliament in the face of a company of armed rebels, who had entered his church for the purpose of silencing or of shooting him; while the latter never for a moment shrank from avowing his allegiance to his sovereign or from repeating the appointed state prayers in divine service, till, after a long course of injury and ill-usage he was compelled at last by threats of imprisonment to leave his beloved Mohawk flock and to seek an asylum in Canada. In the conscientious discharge of their duty to their country, the fear of God in these devoted men raised them above all fear of man! No wonder, if with such examples before their eyes their people became animated with the same steadfast spirit.

But the strength of their religious principles is shewn by their conduct in the wilderness.

It must be admitted that their circumstances as settlers in the bush were by no means favourable to religious habits. Their struggle for the necessities of life, their separation from social restraints, from the ordinances of worship and from pastoral oversight, were all conducive to laxity of morals and indifference to the obligations of religion. But to the credit of the Loyalists be it spoken that, though for years there was the greatest dearth of clergy, and the ministrations of religion in their midst, deeds of lawlessness and immorality but rarely occurred among them.

But more than this, we have ample proof that they prized and welcomed the ordinances of worship whenever they were offered them and lamented their absence. In a letter

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\*History p. 51.

to a friend in England written in the year 1784 by the Rev. Dr. Stuart before mentioned, whose name will ever be fragrant among you, and among all Canadian Churchmen as "Father of the Church in Upper Canada," he says: "I must not omit to mention the anxious desire of the loyal exiles to have clergymen sent among them; and they look to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in their present distress."

The report of this venerable society for the year 1788-9, bears the same testimony.

The Rev. Mr. Wiswall, the Society's Missionary at Cornwallis and Wilmot N. S. thus writes: "Since your Society has allowed a catechist for the Township of Wilmot the people have expressed their grateful sense of the favour by immediately purchasing a cleared acre of land for his use, and building upon it a log house 22x20 for a school and chapel of ease. Mr. Crokeley, an elderly man and suffering loyalist has undertaken the charge. He opened his school on the 1st of Nov. 1787, and he reads to the people the liturgy and suitable tracts on such Sundays as your missionary is engaged in other parts of his mission."

The same report refers to the labours of another missionary who ministered to the pioneers about our own bay, the Rev. Mr. Langhorn. "He is now settled," it states, "at his mission at Ernesttown and Fredericksburg. But he has since Oct. 1787, visited and baptised many children in several places that lie contiguous to the Apanee River. Capt. Hawley, of Ernesttown, has written also to the Society to thank them for their attention to the spiritual wants of the poor people." Only two years after this these settlers, poor as they were, set about erecting two churches, one at Bath, and the other in Fredericksburg; the former yet stands, the latter has been replaced by a neat brick church.

But let me add, the honor of erecting the first church in Upper Canada undoubtedly belongs to the refugee Mohawks, who settled in the Grand River. In it the Rev. Dr. Stuart preached in the summer of 1784 to his old flock from whom he had been so long separated, and received from them such an affectionate and touching welcome.

Such, brethren, are a few of the facts and considerations which must lead the candid mind to conclude, without any desire of exaggerating their claims to sanctity, that the Fathers of Canada were on the whole men whose religious princi-



ples were deep and sincere, who valued the Gospel and the ordinances of worship, and being such, they are not unworthy to be held up to this and succeeding generations of their children as examples of those who "feared God" as well as "honored the King."

We come now to the third in the triad of duties enjoined by the Apostle in the text, viz: "Love the brotherhood"*i.e.*, so say in the words of Bishop Wordsworth, "Sympathising with them in their griefs, succouring them in their troubles, rejoicing with them in their joys, as there is the same blood in the veins of all, the same head of the whole brotherhood, the same spirit knitting together all in one."

We have to enquire how the Loyalists fulfilled this obligation. Was this the mind and disposition which they exemplified?

An answer direct comes to us in the words of Dr. Canniff\*: "It is a remarkable fact, he says, that the Loyalists who planted Upper Canada, not only honored the King and Feared God, but in a very eminent degree, fulfilled the commandment to love one another."

And was it not natural that people animated by the same patriotic feelings, and the same determination to live and die under the the old flag of England; that companions in arms as many of them had been, and companions in suffering as they were; that coming together as refugees into the wilderness, having to undergo the same difficulties, privations and toils in creating homes for themselves, and providing subsistence for their families, and needing, as they did, each other's society, comfort and help, was it not natural that they should be knit together in the closest bonds of fellowship and brotherly regard?

The necessity for the interchange of labor and for the combination of hands to erect their log constructed habitations and to clear away the forest, gave rise to those hearty and happy gatherings called "Bees." The popularity of these re-unions for labor and pleasure, and the multiplication of pretexts for holding them are indications of the neighbourly feeling which prevailed.

I have been informed that the first yield of apples in Adolphustown was the occasion of a very remarkable "Bee." The whole township was invited to it, and after supper a committee was elected to divide the small heap of apples

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\*History p. 257.

among the company. Amid much mirth and jollity the task was accomplished, everyone sharing alike, the owner of the apples receiving no more than the others.

In the dreadful year of famine, known as the "Hungry Year," which followed the withdrawal of the Government rations, a common calamity cemented the settlers even more cordially together. Many, at the risk of future want to themselves, gave away day after day to their more needy neighbours. With some few exceptions the last loaf was divided, and when provisions were sold, it was at fair, not "famine prices."

But what need to multiply instances? No fact is better known, none is more frequently recalled among those who are wont to lament the present decay of the spirit of fellowship in the community, than that the noble band of Loyalists, like the primitive Romans, "Were like brothers in the brave days of old."

But to what end, brethren, am I directing my remarks? For what purpose do I illustrate the virtues, and recall the worth of the Loyalist patriots?

Before broaching the main object which I have in view, I desire, in a few more words, to hold up these high principled men, as worthy of our admiration and imitation. Religion, Loyalty, Fraternity, these were their principles, and they are the Pillars of the State, the Corner Stones of Society, the foundation of all manly and passive virtues. They were the source of that steadfastness, devotion and self-sacrifice which our fathers displayed in the hour of trial, and what, at such a time, would become of a state without qualities like these?

I desire also, to lead you to a sense of devout thankfulness to the Almighty Ruler, for peopling this country with men of such chosen virtue. It is indeed a favour and distinction which we cannot prize too highly, that the foundations of our Dominion were laid in Peace and Righteousness. Rome was founded by Romulus in the blood of his brother Remus. English history begins with the landing of Hengist and his war-band in blood and fire, murder and pillage. The neighbouring Republic was born red-handed, with the blood of her mother's sons and of her own sons and brothers. In happy contrast to these and to most nations, the foundations of our country were laid in *peace*, by men devoted to the highest principles, for which they willingly suffered the loss of all things and counted not their lives dear unto them.

For this proof of Divine goodness it well becomes us to be grateful, especially as it has been the cause, I believe, of many blessings to Canada in time past, and will be the well spring of countless others in time to come. As a recent writer\* observes: "If the seeds of disloyalty were sown in the New England Colonies from the beginning, so it is equally certain that the seeds of loyal connection with the crown and Empire of Britain were similarly sown in Canada and have ever borne the noblest and most glorious fruits. The settlement of this country by the expatriated Loyalists of America, was the leaven that has leavened the whole lump of Canadian nationality and made this country what I trust it will ever remain, the most loyal, orderly, and progressive part of Britain's Empire."

But the main purpose I have in view in making the United Empire Loyalists the theme of my discourse, remains to be stated, and must now be presented very briefly.

Can any one contemplate the character of the devoted pioneers, consider their conduct in their trying hour when they were required on pain of losing property, liberty and even life itself, to forswear their king and country: can any one view their brave and self-sacrificing, though alas, vain exertions in behalf of the unity of the British Empire: can any one follow them as they made their painful pilgrimage through tangled thickets, from the land which had cast them out, from their ruined and pillaged homes, to the soil where the old flag of England yet waved, albeit it was an unbroken forest, and behold how with stout hearts and high purposes they began that battle which was to turn the wilderness into fruitful fields: can any one realize that these patient toilers, these suffering settlers, were *the making of their adopted country*, the founders of her present prosperity and growing greatness; and that the noble impulses which stirred their bosoms, their attachment to their sovereign and British institutions, their love of country and love of justice and charity and freedom and honor, have entered deeply into the character and sentiments of the Canadians, and have been felt for good in every national movement and development: can any one, I say, consider these things without lamenting the scant justice which has been done to the memory of these worthies, not to speak of their cruel vilification by those who drove them from their midst; and

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\*William Kirby, Esq., F.R.S.C.

without astonishment that no monument exists to commemorate their deeds, and services to the land of their adoption? A document in the Dominion Library, relating to Brock's monument, states that "that monument stands in remembrance of him who sacrificed his valuable life in duty to his King and in defence of our Canadian homes." But what more, I ask, did that gallant patriot do, than the U. E. Loyalists, for whom no memorial has ever been reared? It may, indeed, be declared with truth and pride "*si quæris monumentum circumspice.*" If a monument ye seek, look around you on your country—but the glorious truth herein embodied only heightens the ingratitude complained of. There are storied urns and pictured windows to the memory of the gallant few who fell in the Fenian Raid, but to commemorate a band of men who after exhibiting a noble example of suffering patriotism, became the patient founders of a Province, hewn out of the wilderness, and lastly the defenders of their adopted country, no monumental pile, as I have said, exists, while their names are passing from our remembrance, and their very graves are trodden under foot. Such neglect and insensibility on the part of their countrymen, their own flesh and blood, is truly incomprehensible—heathen Rome would have called it *impious*!

Moved by such considerations and feelings as in this discourse I have endeavoured feebly to express, when the Lord Bishop of the diocese appointed me last autumn to the Rectory of Adolphustown, I immediately broached the idea of a U. E. Loyalist Memorial Church. The age and delapidated condition of the present church built by the sons of Loyalists, gave me the opportunity; the approaching Centenary of the landing of the pioneers suggested an appropriate time. An inspection of the old records and memorials of the parish inspired me with greater ardor for the undertaking, for I found the old parish registers and churchyards full of names well known and revered in the traditions of loyalism. I was particularly impressed on beholding the ruinous state of the old pioneer Cemetery, its crumbling monuments and untended graves. It occurred to me then that not only the church itself might be made monumental, but that those precious names over which oblivion was fast creeping, and others as worthy might be preserved to lasting remembrance and honour, by engraving them upon rows of mural tiles, or tablets within the sacred building. From that moment I began to work out my scheme. I was happy

to find that the idea commended itself to gentlemen occupying the highest positions in the country, especially, his Honour the Lieut-Governor of Ontario. In a word so far I have met with nothing but kindness and encouragement in my project. The parishioners, few in number as they are, willingly seconded my efforts and subscribed the sum of \$2,200 towards the building fund. An earnest parishioner\* has in addition to his subscription given a beautiful and elevated site for the church, in full view of the Bay. Other kind contributors have raised the subscription list to about \$2,500, but \$7,000 at least are required to build a stone edifice of moderate dimensions and suitable character. Will you, brethren, hold up my hands and contribute to the good work which I have undertaken? Ample time will be given to subscribers, no immediate payment being required. For although my endeavours are directed to have the corner-stone laid by his Honour the Lieut-Governor with all proper ceremony on the 16th day of June next, we shall proceed no further this year than the foundation of the building, in order that I may have the necessary time to secure subscriptions to the full amount required? Will you help me, brethren, to success? You will, I know, if indeed you have the same mind as the writers of the following words extracted from their own letters upon the subject. His Honour, the Lieut-Governor says, "The U. E. Loyalists deserve the recognition suggested by the Rev. Mr. Forneri, and to it I will gladly give my patronage, time or money," and again, "I shall be with you if I can to lay the corner-stone of the church, and if of any importance to your undertaking you can tell your friends of my wish and intention to be there if possible."† Chief Justice Wallbridge writes, "I esteem it a privilege and an honour to be associated in so good and pleasant a work. You may rely on me for \$100." While Dr. Canniff remarks, "In regard to the Memorial Church in honour of the U. E. L. pioneers of Upper Canada, you have my warmest sympathy, and warmest hope for a successful result of your timely action."

What now will you do for this work of God, and for the honour of those brave men and women who settled around the shores of our beautiful Bay, just one hundred years ago?

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\*J. J. Watson, Esq.

†His Honour, in a later communication, has been pleased to fix the 17th day of June for the ceremony.